

critical digest

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The Weekly New York City Theatre Newsletter \$25 year

Future Dates

The Typewriter-Tempo
7/26...Hear! Hear!-Zieg-
feld 8/3...Skin of Our
Teeth-ANTA 8/16.

Fall Dates

D'Oyly Carte-Shubert-
9/27...Maurice Chevalier-
Playhouse 9/28...View of
Bridge-Coronet 9/29.

Anne Frank-Cort 10/6...
Wooden Dish 10/6...Joyce
Grenfel Requests the Plea-
sure-Bijou 10/10...Sheppard
King-Yiddish Art Theatre-
Downtown Nation 10/10...
FourthSon-Phoenix 10/11...
Will Success Spoil Rock Hun-
ter-Belasco 10/12...Desk
Set-Broadhurst 10/13...Hea-
venly Twins-Playhouse 10/17

The Lark-Longacre 10/24
...No Time for Sergeants-
Alvin 10/29...Comedia Fran-
caise-Broadway 10/25...Chalk
Garden-Barrymore 10/26...
Janus-Plymouth 11/?...Pipe
Dream-Shubert 11/30.

Summer TRYOUTS

Palm Tree in Rose Garden-
Pocono Playhouse 7/18...
Blue Denin-Westport 7/18...
Reluctant Flute-Hyde Park
7/19...Two Fingers of Pride
Ogunquit 8/8...I Hear You
Singing-Saratoga 8/15...A
View of Bridge-Falmouth
8/22...Devil's A Stranger-
Rebooth Beach 8/22.

DIGESTS OF CURRENT THEATRE REVIEWS

Arabian Nights-Jones Beach 6/23...Second edition of
Guy Lombardo's outdoor spectacle was enjoyed by most
of the NY drama critics. Funke, Times, praised all
concerned for a fine job. A visual tone poem surprisingly
massive in its total effect, summed up Beckley, Herald
Tribune. Huge show was even better than first year, okays
McHarry, News. Coleman, Mirror, lauded it as a titantic
gigantic show tighter than first edition. Except for poor
job turned in by Lauritz Melchior, Winston, Post, agreed
with his colleagues on the spectacle aspects of show.
O'Connor, Journal American, and Levinson, World Tele
gram, were both so moved that they filed their pro notices
in the style of Arabian Nights.

Almost Crazy-Longacre-6/20...Iams, News, enjoyed
most of new revue presented by John S Cobb, but felt it
would have been better if certain of the sketches had been
cut. Rest of critics were not as kind. Though most okayed
singing of Babe Hines, and the impersonations of Kay Med-
ford, they found little original in songs or sketches. To
Kerr, Herald Tribune, the evening seemed more like an
audition than a show. Several critics, McClain, Journal
American included, hoped that some day Kay Medford
would get the fine part she deserves. The revue never
jells, adds Herridge, Post.

SUMMER TRYOUTS REVIEWED

Sacrifice to the Winds, John Whiting's adaption of Andre
Obey's new play tried at Lucille Lortel's White Barn, West-
port, Conn, was approved by Coleman, Mirror...3 Tennes-
see Williams plays presented at Lake Hopatcong, N. J.
are fascinating and well acted vignettes about 2 lovers,
approves Herridge, Post...Mother Was a Bachelor pre-
sented at Westport, Conn, is not strong enough for theatre,
but might be okay as take-off for a TV series, pans Bone,
Variety.

Legit theatre tax may be cut to 5% if Rep T. H. McDonald (D-Mass) bill to cut admission taxes to "fine arts events" passes this session. Bill would also okay federal aid to states to set up and aid theatre and other cultural projects.

PLAYS

Seventh Heaven and Almost Crazy closed...Hear! Hear! is new name of Fred Waring show due Aug 6 at Ziegfeld...Lunatics and Lovers has withdrawn its closing notice...Skin of Our Teeth opens in NY Aug 16 at ANTA...First Edition switched opening date to Sept 6, and switched title to Catch a Star...A View From the Bridge will open Sept 29 at Cort...Will success Spoil the Hunter to open Oct 12 at Belasco...Anne Frank - Diary of a Young Girl opens Oct 5 at Cort...The Lark will open Oct 24 at Longacre...The Wooden Dish will debut Oct 6...No Time For Sergeants will open Oct 29 at Alvin...Heavenly Twins will be presented Oct 17 at Playhouse Theatre Guild...The Desk Set starring Shirley Booth will open Oct 13 at Broadhurst.

PLAYERS

John Golden bequeathed his 20 acre Bayside, NY, estate to NYC for use as a public park... Paul Muni to retire after Inherit Wind closes, his wife revealed on a CBS Radio show... Alice Frost replacing Nancy Kelley, The Bad Seed, during latter's vacation... Henry Morgan signed for Will Success Spoil Rock Hunter... Don McHenry rejoined Fanny after appearing in Medea in Paris... Jeanne Shepard portrays leading femme role in Anniversary Waltz.

SUMMER PLAYHOUSES

North Shore Music Circus, Beverly, Mass playing Saturday 4 30 Pm "Sunset Matinees"... Kim Hunter featured in try-out of Peter Blackmore's "Down Came a Blackboard" at East Hampton, NY, and in Greer Johnson's "I Hear You Singing" at Saratoga Springs, NY in August... Theatre Tours, Inc., have added Stratford, Conn. and Atlantic Beach, NY, theatres to tour schedules.

OTHER BROADWAYS

6 showtrains from mid-western cities have booked Inherit the Wind for fall... Isabel Bonner, actress-wife of author Joseph Kramm, died on stage at Carthay Circle, L. A. production of her husband's play The Shrike... Denison University, Granville, Ohio to present 3 plays at US Armed Forces bases in Europe this summer.

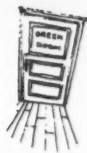
THEATRE VAUDEVILLE

"Masquerade" revue at Radio City Music Hall opening July 14 features 2000 square feet of mirrors on-stage. New film is Alister Roberts... Milt Douglas, Frank Marlowed head new Palace bill.

THEATRE TV & RADIO NOTES

"The Fourposter" will be presented on NBC TV July 28 with Jessica Tandy and Hume Cronyn... Maurice Chevalier will be featured on NBC TV Dec 4... CBS will be back musical version of Pygmalion on Broadway this fall... NBC TV to star Ethel Merman in show recalling her 25 years in show business.

This issue of "C. D." covers NY legit and eastern summer theatre for weeks Jun 29, July 6, and July 13. "C. D." will be issued bi-weekly for the rest of the summer, and will resume weekly publication in Sept.



GREEN
ROOM
DEPARTMENT

BUSSES-ON & OFF... Theatres in nearby shopping areas, with a bus set up to get New Yorkers to them, were suggested by Watt, News... Legit needs a few more people like Theatre Tours' Alex Cohen to give it the tonic that will make it flex its muscles again, states Coleman, Mirror.

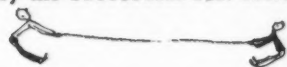
COLUMN TIPS... Karen Anders of Almost Crazy hocked everything she owned to raise \$\$\$ for show, reports Winchell... Howard Hughes said to be interested in producing a Broadway musical, hears Walker... Hollywood may do a biography of John Golden, notes Gardner.

TV EXPERIMENT... NBC TV production of Skin of Our Teeth a few days after all-star revival closes on Broadway may be a painful experiment, explains Variety editorial. Show on Broadway is a doubtful box office hit during the summer. Plus chances of seeing entire show for free on TV may really hurt business.

DRAMA MAIL BAG... Critics failed in 1939 in not approving Mornings' At Seven, pans Times reader... How does C. D. rate Can-Can as 100% Pro asks legit press agent Richard Maney. Records show critics filled unanimous mild pro notices for musical, and outright raves for "newcomer" Gwen Verdon.

CRITICAL THOUGHTS... Broadway managers may argue that Shakespeare plays are not commercial, but the public is proving them wrong, notes Coleman, Mirror... Modern directors have inherited a staggering series of left over jobs that other theatre workers do not want to do, names Kerr, Herald Tribune... Broadway presents finest and widest range of shows seen for years this summer, details O'Connor, Journal American... Next season promises to be the best in 12 years, adds, Coleman, Mirror.

TRICKS PANNED... Designing and directing tricks in theatre which take away from the play itself were condemned by Burr, Playbill. Designers and directors must measure their worth by the successful self obliteration of their art.



PROS & CONS BY T. M. K.

Mornings At Seven presents a perfect cast in a delightfully drawn comedy on mores of small town life. Cast and author understand each character and each action. It is a delight to see such perfection in the theatre.

La Ronde is an exercise in tricky playwrighting that makes for dull play-going. Acting in 10 sequences is uneven, with only Betty Miller liking like a professional (actress, that is.) The rest of the cast played show ala clean burlesque. Usual high quality of Circle production was forgotten by all concerned.



OFF BROADWAY

Theatre 12, which has installed an air conditioning system at Provincetown where they are presenting The Trial, will follow with Turgenev's A Month in the Country, later this summer... Tempo Theatre's next production will be Jean Cocteau's The Typewriter due July 26 ... 4th St Theatre will open in the fall with Helge Krog's Break Up... Pantomime Art Theatre is presenting week-end performances at Rooftop Theatre, 111 E. Houston.

Morning's At Seven won five unanimous votes from NY critics for Proscenium Productions revival at Cherry Lane. Cast includes June Walker, Dorrit Kelton, Kate Harrington. Atkinson, Times, found that Paul Osborn's script is still an original portrait of human folly. Play was presented for short run in 1939 on Broadway, but was picked by Burns Mantle as one of Best Plays of season. Kerr, Herald Tribune, found it a delight for the collector of theatrical miniatures. Watts, Post, agreed with most of reviewers who applauded each of nine actors for perfect jobs. McClain, Journal American, okayed it as off Broadway fare well down, but thought the play was still too slim for uptown.

La Ronde presented at Circle in Square won 2 pro notices from Times and WT&S aisle-sitters and a trio of mild cons from Herald Tribune, Post and Journal American men. Funke, Times, admitted ten scene play tended to be reptitious, but thought it always presented a fascinating picture. Levinson, WT&S, enjoyed it completely. Con side okayed some of acting, but thought format made it pretty dull going. O'Connor, Journal American, summed up the idea by saying it is not a good bad play.



THEATRE BOOK COMMENTS

"Who could ask for Anything More" by Ethel Merman, as told to Pete Martin (Doubleday) was okayed by Down, Variety as fast, fun that achieves a truly dimensional portrait of its fascinating subject.

"America Takes the Stage" by Richard Moody (Indiana U. Press) makes fine reading, approves Variety mugg. It also serves as a handy guide to the immediate and all-too easily lost part of our theatre.



THEATRE TV COMMENTS

"3 for Tonight" presented on CBS TV the week after closing on Broadway was cheered by NY TV critics. One of TV's most exciting and beguiling evenings, raved Gould, Times. Show had talent, technique and a certain bravado, but lacked audience warmth, noted Van Horne, WT&S. Diverting TV entertainment, added Chan, Variety, but it somehow lacked universal appeal.

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